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ABSTRACT

Noting that any word in the English language may be defined as having a "base" sound that conveys meaning, this booklet argues that the literacy problem may be solved through systematic instruction in the mechanics of English spelling. The booklet discusses the two distinct types of bases in the English language--common (one syllable) and power (polysyllabic). The booklet notes that, while students learn the spelling patterns of common bases up to grade three, they do not learn the patterns of the power bases that make up the bulk of the words they read in grades four and above. The booklet then discusses the role of vowels and consonants in the mechanics of English spelling. The booklet also presents observations about the relationship of the spellings of consonant sounds to reading and teaching, and offers a rationale for the basic superiority of the current English system of spelling when compared to any proposed phonetic spelling system. (RS)

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The Mechanics of English Spelling

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by
Don McCabe

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The Mechanics of English Spelling

Everywhere I go I hear somebody say, "I'm the world's worst speller."

Even if it is a logical impossibility, it seems that there must be at least twenty million world's worst spellers. And I think I have met almost half of them.

What is so frustrating is that many of these self-proclaimed world's worst spellers are in a position to help others become good spellers. But they have a built-in rationalization that justifies their non-action. If they are the world's worst speller and if they also happen to be teachers, superintendents of schools, curriculum supervisors, editors of educational magazines, or leaders of educational organizations, and if *they* can't learn to spell, how can anyone? So why bother? It's no big deal.

So what's the answer? Perhaps there is none for them. Closed minds are never opened by simple truths. But for those who do not consider themselves "the world's worst speller" there is a chance that they can listen and become part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

Is there a solution?

I think so. But the solution certainly will not be doing more of what we have always been doing. That is part of the problem.

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What are some of the things that we have always been doing?

- Giving students words to study.

  Results:

  A-students already know at least 13 out of the 15 words given for study (or 18 out of the 20, 22 out of the 25, etc).

  C-students already know about half the words (8) and memorize correctly about half of the words they need to learn (4).

  D- & E- students are lucky to already know any of the words given. They can memorize more of the spellings than C and A students have to (e.g., 6 words) and still fail because 6 words out of 15 isn't enough to pass. What have they learned? Unfortunately, they have learned that they are dumb.

- Correcting students' misspellings on papers.

  Results:

  Teachers spend countless hours carefully marking all mistakes. Students generally spend a total of two seconds looking at what the system has carefully taught them is important (the grade) and then crumple up the paper and throw it away.

- Learning the 1,000 most frequently used words that account for 90% of all normal writing.

  Results: Students who do manage to learn these words as they might 1,000 different telephone numbers, will still misspell 10% of all the words they write. Can you imagine how frustrating it has to be if you had to stop and use a dictionary for every tenth word? I would have had to stop twice just in the last sentence!

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What are some of the things that have worked?

- Student self-correction. (Fitzsimmons, Loomer, 1978)
- Carefully programmed and sequenced presentations of words that follow regular patterns. (McCabe, 1991)

Some of the things that work but haven't been tried!

- **Systematic** teaching of the mechanics of the code/s we use in English spelling. (Webb, McCabe, 1990)

- **Systematic** teaching of the differences between spoken and written language, i.e., the elisions and omissions of sounds -- the "Whudjuh Git" for "What did you get?" (McCabe, 1991).

Why haven't these techniques been tried?

Up until recently, there has not been a complete compilation of all the patterns and all the words that follow these patterns in a format that is usable by either teachers or researchers. And the mechanics of the code (not the code itself) was not really discovered until this compilation of the patterns was almost completed.

So we cannot easily blame the scholars, the researchers, or the teachers for not knowing that which was not available to them.

Even today, the odds are that your nearest university library doesn't even have a copy of *The Patterns of English Spelling* (McCabe, 1992).

"A copy of this book should be in every classroom. It's a reference that can and should be used by every reading teacher at every level."

- Dr. Patrick Groff, San Diego State University.

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Premise: The difficulty in learning a telephone number is directly related to the ease of learning the patterns embedded in it. For example which numbers would be easier to learn? Those in column A or in Column B.

A	B	
C218B00D3A1	1 (800) ABCD-123	(O.D.S.)
31188080822	1 (800) 228-8813	(C.L.C)

Obviously Column B is easier. And the Orton Dyslexia Society's (O.D.S.) number is easier to learn than the number of the Contact Literacy Center (C.L.C.) because of its special combination of patterns.

What is true about learning telephone numbers is also true to a greater extent in learning the spellings of words. Let's take two words **precious** which has only eight letters and **misunderstanding** which has fifteen letters. The eight letter word **precious** can be correctly spelled by less than half the adult population. Yet four out of five can spell the bigger word, *misunderstanding*. The reason lies in the patterns which each word contains and whether or not there has been much of an opportunity for these patterns to be learned.

Let's first of all analyze the big word **misunderstanding** and compare it to the Orton Dyslexia Society's telephone number.

Prefix #1	= **mis**	cf (1) long distance
Prefix #2	= **under**	cf. (800) toll free
Base	= **stand**	cf. ABCD
Suffix	= **ing**	cf. 123

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word Example: misunderstandings		
prefixes **mis under**	**BASE** **stand**	**suffixes** **ing s**

Any word in the English language may be defined as having a **BASE** sound that conveys meaning.

It may have almost any combination of prefixes and suffixes.

Although the concepts of prefixes and suffixes have been taught for years and years, this simple concept of a word containing a BASE sound is not taught in any elementary school, middle school or high school text that we have ever seen.

We hope that it soon will be standard teaching and common knowledge.

Of even more consequence is the fact that there are two kinds of bases. One base has one syllable only. The other base has more than one syllable. (See chart on next page)

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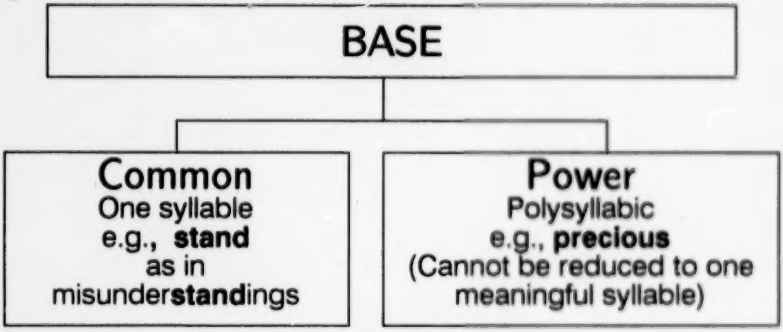

There are two distinct types of **BASES** in the English Language. One may be called **COMMON** because most ordinary words in our language are of this nature and follow this pattern. The second may be called **POWER** because most of these words in our language carry special or significant meanings.

Sample Words with Common Bases:

1. *stepping flashing playing*
2. *standing stamping skipping*

Sample Words with Power Bases:

3. *crucial union patient*
4. *vision mirage unique*

Notice that the sample words with common bases have more letters and more consonant blends than the sample words with power bases. Yet they are easier to read and spell. Why? Because the base words are taught and the suffix -ing is taught. The same cannot be said about the words with power bases. Right? Can students be blamed for not learning what they haven't been taught? No. Can teachers be blamed for not teaching that which they haven't been taught? No. So?

So, those of us who really care about solving the literacy problem, must make the educational world aware of this simple concept. No matter how well students learn to read in grades one through three, if they haven't been taught the spelling patterns of power words, we cannot expect them to now read to learn especially when in grades four on up the curriculum is loaded with new words that have power bases not simple bases.

On the next page read the first paragraph. The following two paragraphs are exactly the same as the first with just a few

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minor alterations in the visual appearance of some of the words. Please read each one and note the difference in your ability to decode the common and the power.

There are too distinct types of bases in the English language. One may be called common because most ordinary words in our language are of this nature and follow this pattern. The second may be called power because most of these words in our language carry special or significant meanings.

COMMON words in a simple "code"

Thayr ar too distinct tipes uv BAYsis in thuh English Language. Wun may bee Kawld COMMON bekuz most ordinary wurds in ar language ar uv this nature and FAHloh this pattern. Thuh second may bee kawld POWER bekuz most ov theez wurds in ar language kairy special ohr significant meeningz.

POWER words in a tougher "code"

There are two fodyomvy types of bases in the Rmh;odj :smhishr. One may be called COMMON because most ptfomstu words in our ;smhishr are of this msyitr and follow this [syyrtm. The drvpmf may be called POWER because most of these words in our ;smhishr carry d[rvos; or dohmogovsmy meanings.

Although you were able to "break" the simple codes, please notice that the amount of mental effort required to break them interfered with your immediate fast comprehension. Decoding must be at the state of nearly 100% automaticity if true rapid comprehension is to take place. The second code is the one that happens when your fingers slide one space over on the typewriter. Breaking this code might have been easy for *you*. But most people would need to have it taught to them, and still they would have problems reading it. Right?

As should be obvious from the two illustrative paragraphs above, to be a good reader and speller one must know how to read and spell both types of words. For beginners, it is most important to learn the common words first. One can communicate to some degree using just common words. However, both **COMMON BASES** and **POWER BASES** have one thing in common. They have the same structures of sounds and use various different letters to represent sounds.

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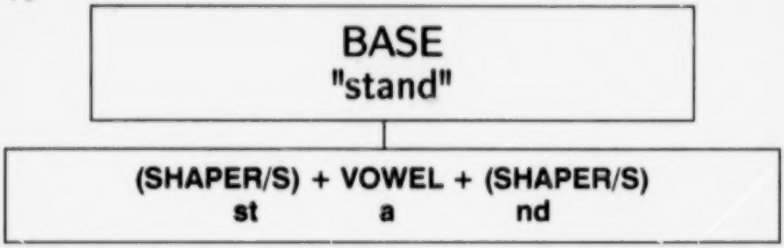

The simplest of all words are words that contain just a vowel. No shaper in front. No shaper in back. *For example:*

Word	Shaper/s	Vowel	Shaper/s
A	-	AY	-
oh	-	OH	-
I, eye, aye	-	YH	-
Oy!	-	OY	-
Ow!	-	OW	-

Some words are shaped only in front. For example:

Word	Shaper/s	Vowel	Shaper/s
bay	*b*	AY	-
bee, be, Bea	*b*	EE	-
by, bye, buy, bi-	*b*	YH	-
Bo, bow, beau	*b*	OH	-
boo!	*b*	OO	-
boy	*b*	OY	-
bow, bough	*b*	OW	-

Some words are shaped at the end of the vowel. For example:

Word	Shaper/s	Vowel	Shapers
at	-	a	*t*
ebb	-	e	*b*
it	-	i	*t*
on	-	ah	*n*
up	-	u	*p*
aim	-	AY	*m*
eat	-	EE	*t*
ice	-	YH	*s*
oat	-	OH	*t*

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Word	Shaper/s	Vowel	Shapers
ooze	-	OO	*z*
ought	-	AW	*t*
out	-	OW	*t*
oil	-	OY	*l*

Most words are simply vowel sounds shaped before and after with consonants. For example:

Word	Shaper	Vowel SOUND	Shaper	Suffix -s
bat	*b*	a	*t*	*bats*
bet	*b*	e	*t*	*bets*
bit	*b*	i	*t*	*bits*
lot	*l*	ah	*t*	*lots*
but	*b*	u	*t*	*buts*
bait	*b*	AY	*t*	*baits*
beet	*b*	EE	*t*	*beets*
bite	*b*	YH	*t*	*bites*
boat	*b*	OH	*t*	*boats*
boot	*b*	OO	*t*	*boots*
foot	*f*	uu	*t*	*foots*
fought	*f*	AW	*t*	-----
void	*v*	OY	*d*	*voids*
bout	*b*	OW	*t*	*bouts*

The 14* basic vowel sounds in the English language have multiple spellings. In fact, there are so many different spellings that some scholars such as Dewey (1970) have despaired of ever having a system to teach spelling and have advocated that we scrap our present system of spelling for a simplified phonetic spelling system (Rondthaler and Lias, 1988). However, we feel that upon analysis there is an inner logic of our language that simplifies its spelling and makes it superior to that of a totally phonetic approach. More about that on page 23.

* We recognize the fact that linguists, phoneticians, and phonics instructors will probably never come to any agreement as to what a vowel truly is and how many there are. We have found it easier to teach vowels using "-R controls" to cover what we consider to be slight alterations in the basic vowel sounds rather than completely independent vowels, somewhat analagous to the concept of allophones.

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VOWELS

It seems strange that although every word must have a vowel,* for the purposes of reading and spelling, vowels are not half as important as the consonants (which we sometimes call shapers).

Vowels removed from the above paragraph and replaced with asterisks:

*t s**ms str*ng* th*t *lth**gh *v*ry w*rd m*st h*v* * v*w*l, f*r th* p*rp*s*s *f r**d*ng *nd sp*il*ng, v*w*ls *r* n* t h*lf *s *mp*rt*nt *s th* c*ns*n*nts (wh*ch w* s*m*t*m*s c*ll sh*p*rs).

Consonants removed from the above paragraphs:

I* *ee** ***a**e **a* a***ou** e*e*y *o** *u** *a*e a *o*e*, *o* **e *u**o*e* o* *ea*i** a** **e**i**, *o*e** a*e *o* *a** a* i**o**a** a* **e *o**o*a*** (**i** *e *o*e*i*e* *a** **a*e**).

What stands out on the VOWEL chart on the next page is the utter simplicity of the short vowels in the common bases. This is perhaps why nearly all reading and spelling systems begin with the short vowels.

The next most obvious observation concerning the chart is that the LONG VOWELS appear to be the most inconsistent with 9 different spellings for the sound of "AY", 11 different spellings for "EE", 6 for "YH", 7 for "OH", and 9 for "OO".

Less obvious is the difference between the spellings used for vowel sounds in words that have POWER BASES (Polysyllabic) and those that have COMMON BASES (One syllable). One difference that we perceive is in the TIME ON TASK devoted to instruction in schools on the sounds in words and how these sounds are spelled.

---

* Yes, we know there are a few words without vowels, e.g., tsk, pssst, and sh-h.

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However, we don't want to get bogged down in a controversy about current practices in the teaching, non-teaching, or incorrect teaching of "PHONIC RULES." (Anderson, 1984) What we do want to stress is that:

While the POWER words of our language require the most amount of instructional time to learn, they receive the least amount of attention by textbook authors and classroom teachers.

- **Three out of every four words a fairly good reader cannot read contain the patterns of power words that are almost never taught by any teachers and are rarely if ever found in their text books.**
- **Isn't it about time we begin to teach these patterns?**
- **Is there a more convenient way of teaching these patterns than through the backdoor of spelling?**

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Short Vowels

Spellings that occur in Common Bases (One Syllable) such as **stand** in misunder**stand**ing	Spellings that occur in Power Bases (Polysyllabic) such as **special** in **special**ties
"a" = a in cat; ai in plaid.	a = a in panic.
"e" = e in bet; ea in sweat.	e = e in epic.
"i" = i in Jim;	i = i in mimic;
y in gym.	y in physician;
	i_e in definite;
	a_e in private;
	u_e in minute;
	ai in fountain.
"AH" = o in dot;	"AH" = o in comic;
a in wad.	oi in memoires.
"u" = u in cut.	"UH" = a in steward;
	e in falter;
	i in confirm;
	o in onion;
	u in lettuce;
	ou in courage.

Notice the consistency among the spellings of the short vowels. Generally speaking, there are only two possibilities for any particular pattern. The only **apparent** exceptions come with suffixes such as **-ate**, **-ite**, and **-ute** that are all pronounced "it" as in *priv***ate**, *defin***ite**, and *min***ute**. But since these suffixes are consistent in their pronunciations, they should not be considered "exceptions" to the silent e rule. In fact, because these words have a polysyllabic base we say:

The silent e rule applies ONLY to words that have a COMMON (one syllable) BASE.

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Long Vowels

Spellings that occur in Common Bases (One syllable) such as **state** in under**state**ment

"AY" = ay in tray; ai in train;
ey in they; ei in vein;
eig in reign;
eigh in weigh;
ea in break;
a_e in brake.

"EE" = e in we; ee in wee;
ea in tea;
e_e in Pete;
ie in field;
ei in weird;
ey in key.

"YH" = i in I;
y in my;
igh in high;
ei in stein.

"OH" = o in go;
o_e in vote;
oa in goat;
ow in grow;
ough in dough.

"OO" = u in flu; ou in you
o in to; oo in too;
eu in feud; ew in dew;
ue in due;
ua in dual;
ui in fruit.

Spellings that occur in Power Bases (Polysyllabic) such as **special** in **special**ties

"AY" = e in debut;
é resumé;
ée in fiancée;
et in buffet.

"EE" = i in technique;
is in debris;
it in esprit;
i_e in petite.

"YH" = y in psycho.

"OH" = au in chauffeur;
eau in plateau;
ot in depot.

"OO" = ut in debut;
ou in vermouth;
eu in Europe.

Notice that there are **fewer variations** among the spelling of long vowels in the **POWER** bases. These spellings, however, are rarely if ever systematically taught in any spelling or reading series published anywhere.

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Other Vowels

Spellings that occur in Common Bases

"UU" = u in put;
oo in foot.

"OY" = oi in boil;
oy in boy.

"OW" = ow in pow;
ou in pout.

"AW" = a in call;
aw in hawk;
al in talk;
au in fraud;
augh in taught;
ough in bought;
au_e in cause.

Spellings that occur in Power Bases

"UU" = u in butcher.

"OY" = oi in exploit;
oy in employ.

"OW = ou in announce.

"AW" = au in sausage.

Notice that
unlike the short and long vowels
there are fewer variations among the
"OTHER VOWELS" in the POWER bases.

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Shapers (Consonants)

Spellings that occur in Common Bases

b = b in bib;
bu in build.

d = d in did;
ed in roared.

f = f in fall;
ph in phone;
gh in cough.

g = g in go;
gh in ghost;
gu in guilt.

h = h in hat;
wh in who.

j = j in jam;
g in gem;
dge in bridge;
ge in George.

k = k in kiss;
c in cat;
ck in back;
q in quick.

l = l in luck;
ll in all.

m = m in me;
mb in dumb.

Spellings that occur in Power Bases

b = b in ballistics.

d = d in dedicated;
ed in resolved.

f = f in frantic;
ph in photograph.

g = g in gasoline;
gh in ghetto;
gue in fatigue.

h = h in hazardous;
j = in Jose and Baja.

j = j in jewelry;
ge in surgeon;
gi in religion.

k = k in kernel;
q in liquid;
qu in liquor;
que in unique;
ch in mechanic;
c in panic;
cu in circuit.

l = l in label;
ll in llama.

m = m in mutual;
mn in condemn.

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Shapers (Consonants) Continued

Spellings that occur in Common Bases

n = n in new;
kn in knew;
gn in gnat.

p = p in pop.

r = r in roar;
wr in wrap.

s = s in sits;
ss in kiss;
ce in prince;
ts in prints;
se in rinse;
sc in scene.

t = t in toot;
ed in missed.

v = v in vat;
ve in solve.

w = w in wick;
u in quick

y = y in you;
nothing* in f-ew.

z = z in zoo;
s in throws;
se in cause.

Spellings that occur in Power Bases

n = n in notorious;
pn in pneumonia;
mn in mnemonics.

p = p in popular.

r = r in regular;
rh in rhapsody.

s = s in social;
ss in permissive;
ce in residence;
ts in residents;
se in response;
sc in descend.

t = t in tenant;
ed in released;
pt in pterodactyl.

v = v in victory;
ve in relieve.

w = w in warrant;
u in Guatamala.

y = y in yodel;
i in union;
nothing* in _union.

z = z in zebra;
s in appraisal.

* The proper linguistic term is null. The consonant /y/ is frequently without a letter to indicate its presence. See "The Case of the Invisible Y or Why is there a Y in You but not in union and Eunice?" This pamphlet is free from AVKO with a large self-addressed envelope with postage for 3 oz.

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Beginning Special Shapers that occur in Common Bases

Sound	Spelling
bl	= bl in black
br	= br in bring
by	= b- in bugle
ch	= ch in church
dr	= dr in drop
dw	= dw in dwell
fl	= fl in flop;
fr	= fr in free;
fy	= f- in few
gl	= gl in glass;
gr	= gr in grass
gw	= gu in Guam
hy	= h- in huge
kl	= cl in class
kr	= cr in creep
kr	= chr in Christ
kw	= qu in quit
ky	= c- in cute
my	= m- in mule
pl	= pl in play
pr	= pr in pray
py	= p- in pew
sf	= sph in sphere
sh	= sh in shop; s in sure
sk	= sk in skip; sc in scat; sch in school
skr	= scr in scrap
skw	= squ in squat
sl	= sl in slip
sm	= sm in small
sn	= sn in snip
sp	= sp in spot
spl	= spl in splash
spr	= spr in spring
st	= st in stop
str	= str in strap
sw	= sw in swim;
tr	= tr in trap
tw	= tw in twin
vy	= vi in view

Beginning Special Shapers that occur in Power Bases

Sound	Spelling
bl	= bl in blatant
br	= br in brilliant
by	= b- in bureau
ch	= t in nature
dr	= dr in drama
dw	= dw in dwindle
fl	= fl in fluid; phl phlebitis
fr	= fr in frenzy; phr phrensy
fy	= f- in futile
gl	= gl in glucose
gr	= gr in grunion
gw	= gu in Guatamala
hy	= h- in heuristic
kl	= cl in clients
kr	= cr cripple; chr Christian
kw	= qu in question
ky	= c- in cuneiform
my	= m- in mutants
pl	= pl in placid
pr	= pr in proficient
py	= p- in pewter
sf	= sph in sphygmometer
sh	= ch chauffeur; si tension; ssi mission; xi anxious; ti initial; sch schlimazel
sk	= sk skeptic; sc scavenge; sch in schedule
skr	= scr in scrabble
skw	= squ in squabble
sl	= sl in slumber
sm	= sm in smother
sn	= sn in snivelling
sp	= sp in spiritual
spl	= spl in splendid
spr	= spr in sprinkle
st	= st in stellar
str	= str in strenuous
sw	= sw swivel; persuasive
tr	= tr in tradition
tw	= tw in twiddle
vy	= vi in review
zh	= s treasure; si in vision

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Ending Special Shapers:

bd = bed in robed;
= bbed in robbed;
bz = bs in grabs
bz = bes in babes
dz = ds in lads
dz = des in shades
fs = ffs in stiffs
= fts in lifts
= fes in safes
ft = ft in raft
= ffed in staffed
gd = gged in dragged
gz = gs in drags
jd = ged in raged
ks = cks in socks;
x in sox
kes in lakes
kt = ct in pact
cked in packed
ld = ld in build
lled in billed
led in ruled
lf = lf in shelf
lfs = lfs in shelfs
lj = ldge in buldge
ljd = ldged in buldged
lk = lk in milk
lks = lks in milks
lkt = lked in bilked
lm = lm in film
lmd = lmed in filmed
lmz = lms in films
ln = ln in kiln
lp = lp in help
lps = lps in helps
lpt = lped in helped
ls = lse in false
= lts in faults
lt = lt in silt
lz = lls in bills
md = med in aimed;
mmed in dimmed
mp = mp in camp
mps = mps in limps
mpse in glimpse
mt = mpt in tempt
mped in camped
mz = ms in rams
nd = nd in band;
nned in banned
ngd = nged in banged
ngk = nk in bank
ngkt" = nked in banked
ngz = ngs in bangs
ns = nse in rinse
ns = nce in prince
nts in prints
nt = nt in plant
ps = ps in laps;
pse in lapse
pst = psed in lapsed
rb = rb in garb
rbd = rbed in barbed
rbz = rbs in barbs
rd = rd in yard
rdz = rds in yards
rf = rf in scarf
rft = rfed in barfed
rg = rg in burg
rj = rge in large
rjd = rged in barged
rk = rk in dark
rks = rks in marks
rks = rx in Marx
rkt" = rked in parked
rl = rl in Carl
rld = rled in curled
rlz" = rls in curls
rm = rm in arm
rmd = rmed in farmed
rmz" = rms in farms
rn = rn in barn
rnd" = rned in earned
rnz" = rns in learns
rp = rp in burp
rps" = rps in burps
rpt" = rped in warped
rs = rse in nurse
rt = rt in art
rv = rve in carve
rvd" = rved in curved
rz = rs in cars
sk = sk in ask
sc in disc
sm = sm in spasm
sp = sp in grasp
sps = sps in lisps
spt = sped in grasped
st = st mist
ssed in missed
sked in asked
ced in raced
sed in chased
ste in chaste
vd = ved in loved
vz = ves in loves
zd = zed in hazed
sed in raised
zzed in razzed

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Observations about the relationship of the spellings of consonant sounds (shapers) to reading and teaching.

The beginning sounds (onsets in the latest jargon) are taught more completely and systematically than the medial or ending sounds (rimes!). For that reason, students are far more likely to misspell medial or ending consonant sounds than beginning sounds. For example, students are far more likely to misspell the ending "**st**" sound in pa**ced** or pa**ste** than they are the beginning "**st**" in the words **st**op and **st**art.

If medial and ending sounds are more difficult to learn than beginning sounds, it only seems reasonable that we should spend at least as much time on task learning spellings of the ending sounds (rimes) as on the beginning sounds (onsets).

A few very highly consistent ending sounds **rarely taught** but often misspelled:

Onset Sound	+ Rime Sound	Spelling onset + rime	Sample words
"sh"	"us"	ci+ous	precious, delicious
"sh"	"us"	ti+ous	nutritious, ambitious
"sh"	"ul"	ci+al	special, social
"sh"	"ul"	ti+al	initial, essentials
"sh"	"un"	ssi+on	permission, mission
"sh"	"un"	ci+on	suspicion, coercion
"sh"	"un"	ti+on	ignition, solution
	"g"	gue	vague, intrigue
"k"	"ul"	cle	miracle, icicle

It is quite true that after learning the basic phonic patterns some students will learn on their own the rest of the patterns. If you are a good speller, you are one of the lucky ones. You learned all on your own. You were never taught the advanced patterns. If you count yourself as one of the world's worst spellers, then you are one of many who needed the opportunity to be taught these patterns but weren't given the chance.

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Synopsis of Spelling Structures of the English Language as presented in *The Patterns of English Spelling* (McCabe, 1992)

Volume Number	TYPES OF WORDS	EXAMPLES			PAGES
1	Short Vowels: CVC	dad	get	tin	101-160
2	Short Vowels: CVCC	band	went	itch	201-282
3	Long Vowels: CV & CVCe	go	nice	tube	301-380
4	Long Vowels: CVVC	raid	seem	roam	401-442
5	-R & W- controls	car	cart	ward	501-534
6	Basic Suffixes	batter	battle	dreadful	601-691
7	The Ending Y's	destiny	simplify	trickiest	701-764
8	Power Suffixes	precious	partially	permission	801-880
9	Advanced Patterns	techniques	chauvinist	fiancée	901-962
10	Prefixes/Suffixes/Roots	psychology	autograph	synthesizer	1001-74

Part of a Sample page showing the patterns --

AD DAD ("DAD") FAMILY

bad
had
mad
sad
glad
lad lads laddy laddies
clad
dad dads daddy daddies
his dad's car
their dads' cars
fad fads
pad pads **padded** padding rice paddy paddies
ad ads
Tad Tad's dad
tad

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Rationale for the basic superiority of the current English system of spelling when compared to any proposed **phonetic** spelling system.

Current English Spelling	A Phonetic System*

1. The past tense in most English words is simply spelled -ed. In a phonetic spelling system, there would be four different spellings.

The car roared past.	Thu kaar rord past.
We talked to him.	We tawk to him.
We talked about him.	We tawkt ubout him.
He added it up.	He adud it up.

2. The morphemic relationships that are evident in current spelling would be obliterated in any phonetic spelling system

atrocious / atrocities	utroshus / utraasuteez
syllable / syllabic	silubul / silaabik
magic / magician	majik / mujishun
mason / masonic	maesun / musaanik
finite / infinite	fieniet / infinit

3. The grammatical function of words which are technically homophones would be obscured by having a phonetic spelling of both:

missed / mist	mist
passed / past	past
tacked / tact	takt
bends / Ben's	benz
they're / their / there	thaer

4. There are hundreds of different dialects of English. We all can read the same words and translate them immediately into our own dialect. When a native Bostonian reads the words, car, bar, star, etc., he hears "kah" "bah" and "stah" in his head. The Englishman reads the word herb and pronounces it "HURB." The American reads herb and pronounces it "URB." Which spelling should be used? The British "HURB" or the American "URB." How about the word schedule. Should we use "skedjul" or "shedul"? If a writer wants a person to pronounce words according to a particular dialect, we have the tools to do so. "Ah'm a comin' daown rat naow" is the way some writers think a person from North Carolina would say "I am coming down right now." With a strictly phonetic alphabet, everyone who doesn't speak the standard dialect that is used, would find it harder to understand what is being read.

* rules proposed by the American Language Academy (Rondthaler and Lias, 1986)

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